

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION, *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION,
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,

Defendants.

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) Civ. A. No. 1:05-CV-1004 (ESH)
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Exhibit G to Coppolino Declaration

BAAML**ACLU-NC PRESS RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:****Tuesday, October 5, 2004****PRESS CONTACT:****Stella Richardson, ACLU 415-621-2493****FBI'S NEW SURVEILLANCE PLAN CHILLS RELIGIOUS AND
POLITICAL ACTIVITY -- BAY AREA CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS WARN****FBI Ignores Groups Request for Meeting – Refuses Prompt
Disclosure of Information About Questioning Practices
(documents below)**

SAN FRANCISCO – The American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC-SF), the Bay Area Association of Muslim Lawyers (BAAML), the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), and the ACLU of Northern California (ACLU-NC) pledge to monitor a new government plan to use "aggressive - even obvious - surveillance" tactics in advance of the November 2nd general election. In response, the civil rights groups are distributing 20,000 brochures in Arabic, Urdu and English that explain what to do if the FBI or immigration agents contact persons for questioning. The groups urge individuals to consult with a lawyer before talking with agents, and are publicizing the **National Lawyers Guild free legal hotline, 415-285-1041.**

"We are encouraging people to contact an attorney to represent them at these interviews," said Stacy Tolchin of the National Lawyers Guild. "In the past, the government has used these interviews to find out the immigration status of friends and family and to initiate deportation proceedings."

According to several national news reports, the FBI plans to launch aggressive and open surveillance of persons and their families suspected of being terrorist sympathizers, but who are not suspected of any crime. The reports say that mosques will be revisited and worshippers questioned. This is particularly disturbing for the Muslim community that is beginning Ramadan this month, and has also been controversial within the FBI. As part of the plan, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has begun a new round of questioning and arrests of persons suspected of immigration violations.

"These racially and religiously biased tactics do nothing for improving the security of the public," said Nancy Hormachea of the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee of San Francisco. "Since September 11, thousands of Arab and Muslim men were rounded up, detained, held incommunicado and physically abused and not one of these men was found to be in any way involved in terrorism."

Shirin Sinnar, President of the Bay Area Association of Muslim Lawyers added: "Rather than

focusing on terrorist threats, the broad sweep of the FBI's questioning seems designed to intimidate a community and chill religious and political expression."

Over the past three years, Middle Eastern and South Asian neighborhoods and communities have borne the brunt of the federal government's response to 9/11. Directly after the attacks, more than a thousand, and possibly upwards of 2,000 men were rounded up secretly by the Justice Department only to be later found to have no connection to the attacks. The "October Plan," as news reports call it, is the fifth incidence of an explicit FBI dragnet, targeted at American Muslims and Middle Easterners.

In efforts to find out more about the FBI's questioning of targeted communities, on July 16, 2004 the National Lawyers Guild, Bay Area Muslim Lawyers, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, and the ACLU-NC requested a meeting with the FBI. The FBI never responded.

On August 20, 2004, the ACLU-NC filed requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The requests ask for documents in two basic areas: questioning of recent immigrants and U.S. citizens of Arab and Muslim descent and surveillance of political and religious activity, both being carried out by the FBI and their local Joint Terrorism Task Forces. Given the immediacy of the questioning programs, the ACLU-NC sought expedited processing of the requests. However, in a letter dated September 22, 2004, that request was also denied.

"The FBI should come clean about their questioning plans, promptly disclose information related to the operation of the Joint Terrorism Task Forces, and meet with interested civil rights organizations," said Mark Schlosberg, Police Practices Policy Director of the ACLU-NC. "Adopting and implementing secret questioning plans only creates more fear and alienates the very communities that we need to be working with."

Previously, the FBI launched four separate rounds of questioning, which routinely involved interrogating interviewees with questions about their religious practices and political beliefs. In many of the interviews, the FBI actually collected information about interviewee's associational activity, including copying the data from cell phone contact lists.

Nationally, the ACLU and NLG are working closely with Amnesty International, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Arab-American Institute, Council on American-Islamic Relations and the Muslim Public Affairs Council to monitor and provide services for the impacted communities.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

- **Know Your Rights brochures** ([english](#)) ([arabic](#))
- [9.10.2004](#) - Request Under Freedom of Information Act / Expedited Processing Requested
- [10.05.2004](#) - Freedom of Information Act Appeal - Administrative Appeal of Denial of Request for Expedited Processing

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